



For the record my name is Kim Leighton and I represent NARAL Pro-Choice Montana, the state's largest grassroots organization dedicated solely to reproductive rights. We represent 1,200 members and 5,000 activists statewide.

We stand in full support of House Bill 481.

As an organization that believes in, and advocates under the reproductive justice framework, I come here today urging you to provide legal protections for all of Montana's citizens. Within this reproductive justice framework, we advocate within the reproductive rights platform, but also within a context that focuses attention on the social, political and economic inequalities among different communities that contribute to encroachments of reproductive justice.

NARAL Pro-Choice Montana operates under the belief that not only, do all people deserve the right to make their own personal, private medical decisions, but we also adhere to the credence that everyone should be given the space to live their lives free from harm, mistreatment or discrimination of any kind. You may hear statements today that discrimination against the LGBTQ community does not exist. In fact, it does exist, and it happens everyday.

Our friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers and colleagues are in fear. They are in fear of losing their homes, their jobs, being kicked out of a public space, or accessing services. Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure in achieving these basic human needs.

This is about justice, human dignity and respect. This committee, and legislative body as whole, has the distinct opportunity to show Montana that everyone matters and everyone should be protected, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity.

For all of these reasons, we strongly urge a Do Pass on HB 481.